

THE ADVOCATE

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Special points of interest

- Canada moves forward on overcoming poverty
- How do we look?
- US and Canadian actions relating to the global food crisis

GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

BY CHRIS MEEHAN, CRC COMMUNICATIONS

By now you have probably heard or read the news that there is a global food crisis that is already affecting vulnerable people around the world and threatens many more.

Please keep this situation in your thoughts, prayers and actions.

Christian Reformed Church in North America agencies are busy working to develop a coordinated response to the crisis of rising food prices which is causing increasing hunger and political unrest in countries worldwide.

Through a range of programs, CRCNA agencies already address the issue of hunger in North America and elsewhere in the world. But the current challenge of rising prices – and increasing unrest in such countries as Haiti - requires quick action.

“We are looking at organizing a joint agency response,” says Jacob Kramer, international relief director for CRWRC.

“We’re looking at it as a way to educate people, and we will need to appeal for funds for joint

hunger programming that might develop.”

CRC efforts come in the wake of a plea from Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank, who recently called on the international community to act urgently in helping needy people and “put our money where our mouth is.”

Besides Haiti, Egypt and the Philippines are among the countries facing civil unrest because of food prices and shortages.

Meanwhile, President George Bush has ordered the release of \$200 million in aid from a food reserve known as the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust.

At the same time, the Canadian government has stepped forward to donate \$10 million to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help address the problem, says Christian Reformed World Relief Committee’s senior project manager, Grace Wiebe.

The CRWRC is a principal partner of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. [Read the rest of this article here.](#)

[More on the crisis](#)

- Read a [short Q&A from BBC News](#) that explores some of the reasons behind the rising food costs.
- A [quick fact sheet](#) on the crisis from Church World Service (pdf)
- The Washington Post has a [week-long series](#) examining the global food crisis. (Free registration required.)
- Coverage from [Canada’s](#) anti-poverty movement (Make Poverty History) and the [US’s](#) (ONE).



NEWS BRIEFS

CRC-Canada partner reports progress on poverty reduction strategies

Over the last two years, KAIROS, an ecumenical partner organization in Canada, and its members have been working with many others to encourage governments in Canada to develop strategies – and targets – for poverty reduction.



Efforts are paying off: five Canadian provinces (Quebec, Newfoundland-Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Ontario) now have, or are developing, poverty reduction plans.

Now there is progress at the federal level too.

Starting in May, the Human Resources and Social Development (HUMA) parliamentary committee will consult with groups and individuals across Canada about what the government should do to reduce poverty – and whether the government should adopt a pan-Canadian anti-poverty strategy with clear targets and goals.

- From KAIROS Times.

Learn more about the work of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives at www.kairoscanada.org.

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES



Hey, we look nice! Check out our little website makeover at www.crcjustice.org.

Most of our content has been updated along with our look, so spend a bit of time browsing around and let us know what you think (osiha@crcna.org).

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Also, don't forget that you can **connect with others in the denomination** who are passionate about social justice by joining <http://justiceseekers.ning.com>.

There are lots of interesting conversations happening there every day and a bunch of helpful tools (event calendars, photo and video sharing, etc.) for you to use.

If you're confused or intimidated, just **click on the FAQ page** for step-by-step help with any of the site's features, including setting up an account.



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A new resource from KAIROS about building relationships with Aboriginal people is now available.

While not online yet, interested folks can email in their order for In Peace & Friendship to fgolich@kairoscanada.org.

ADVOCATE CALENDAR

May 10 is World Fair Trade Day!

This year's global campaign looks at how ecology and fair trade are connected.



To learn more about this year's focus, search for events in your community, and view the latest news, visit www.wftday.org.

You can also check out www.transfairusa.org and

www.transfair.ca for more Fair Trade Day information and materials from the US and Canadian fair trade certifying organizations.

BFW Lobby Day, June 17

Bread for the World's annual lobby day is a chance for Christians around the US to meet with their members of congress and advocate for policies that affect poor and hungry at home and abroad.

This year's advocacy push is for more and better poverty-

focused development assistance.

Details about Lobby Day, including how to request a meeting and background on the Global Poverty Act can be found on Bread's website:



<http://www.bread.org/take-action/lobby-day.html>.

ACTION OPPORTUNITIES

• Responding to the global food crisis, the anti-poverty ONE Campaign has made a petition available on its website. The petition calls on President Bush to prioritize the hunger crisis at the G8 summit meeting this July, and to secure commitments for additional resources for all types of food assistance and increased agricultural productivity in developing countries. You can sign onto the petition at www.one.org.

• [A new action alert from Save Darfur Canada](#) asks citizens to send a letter and a small portion of rice to the Prime Minister. Check out the details below and consider taking action:

The World Food Program (WFP) has announced that food rations in Darfur will be reduced by half - from 2,156 calories per person, per day, to only 1,242 calories.

The cut is due to insecurity along delivery routes. Since the beginning of 2008, 60 WFP contracted trucks have been hijacked in Darfur, with 39 trucks still missing and 26 drivers unaccounted for. One driver was killed in Darfur last month.

Please send the Prime Minister 15 grams (four teaspoons) of rice, beans, or lentils, along with a letter. The cut in rations means that cereals will be cut to 225 grams and high-protein pulses (beans or lentils) will be cut to only 30 grams. Can you imagine having only 30 grams of protein-rich food each day?

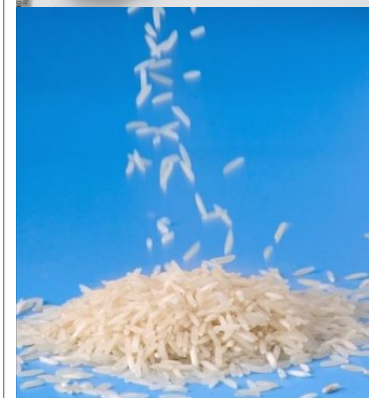
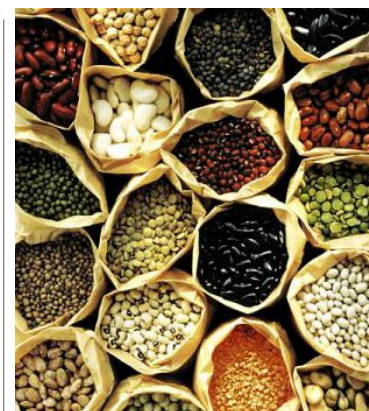
Simply add the dry food and letter to a regular envelope, add one regular stamp and tape the envelope shut to ensure that it is well-sealed!

The Canadian government can take important steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, by working to improve the security situation in Darfur. The United Nations/African Union joint peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) needs additional support from Canada and other countries.

The mission was supposed to be deployed by December 31st, 2007, but it has encountered huge delays due to obstruction by the Sudanese government and a lack of support from the international community.

In late March, Foreign Affairs Minister Bernier announced that in addition to Canada's regular contribution to UN peacekeeping, that we will contribute an additional \$40 million to the UNAMID mission, plus additional funds for humanitarian assistance and for peacekeeping in Southern Sudan.

This step is welcome, and is the result of the concerns and actions of people like you, all across the country. At the same time, the situation remains dire. Canada can and must do more. [Click here to view and print the letter](#) to the PM and for more information on the situation.



JUSTICE & WORSHIP

Resources for a service focusing on hunger:

-A [collection of sermons](#) on the issue of hunger from Seeds Publishers

-[Quotes on hunger](#) from Hunger No More.

-Online hub for news, op-eds, special features, facts and more at [World Hunger Notes](#).

-Loads of [worship resources](#) from children's sermons to liturgy suggestions to litanies, songs and sermon ideas at CRWRC.

The Advocate

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